

M

116

118

Mint of the United States
Dec. 26. 1840.

Sir,

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 22^d inst., in which you state that it has been suggested to the Department whether it would not be proper to furnish the New Orleans Mint with Eagle dies. As this is the second time that this suggestion has been made, I must suppose that there is some particular desire to have this variety of gold coins struck at New Orleans, and I have accordingly ordered a pair of dies to be immediately prepared. It has appeared to me, however, that the smaller denominations were better suited to the amount of the deposits at this Mint, and that the trouble and expense of making the fixtures for the Eagle ought to be avoided. The whole amount of gold deposits in 1839 was but \$88,907; and in the eleven months which have elapsed of the present year, the amount is but \$239,927. These are ~~very~~ small sums, and have, as I think properly, been coined into half and quarter eagles. — Still I can have no possible objection to furnish Eagle dies, and the Superintendent, in consultation with the depositories, will then have a full choice as to the denominations to be coined. — If Congress would repeal the law making foreign gold coins a legal tender on terms which keep them from recoinage, the operations of the New Orleans Mint, in this metal,

might make the striking of Eagles desirable.

In the conclusion of your letter you ask me "to urge upon the Officers of the New Orleans Branch ~~Point~~ the necessity of great industry and activity in the coming year."— I shall be happy to communicate your desires in this matter, in which I join; but I would, I think, be doing injustice to those officers, were I to allow it to be inferred that their business has been neglected. I have before me the reports for the present year, up to the beginning of December. The amount of deposits was \$741,023, and that of Coinage \$813,600.— No remark is necessary on this statement: All the deposits have been coined, and the deficiencies of the last year, caused by death of officers and men, repaired. If this Mint has not answered the expectations of some of its most sanguine advocates, the fault lies in the small amount of the deposits, over which the officers have no control.

Very respectfully,

your faithful servant
R. M. Patterson,
(Director.)

To/
Hon. Levi Woodbury,
Secretary of Treasury. }